DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 429 HE 029 123

AUTHOR Lipson, Helen D.
TITLE How Does Race Matter? White Male College Students' Perspectives on Institutional Racism and Affirmative Action.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-13, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Affirmative Action; Blacks; College Segregation; Cultural Differences; Educational Discrimination; *Ethnic Bias; Higher Education; Hispanic Americans; *Integration Readiness; Minority Groups; *Racial Attitudes; *Racial Bias; Racial Composition; *Racial Differences; Racial Integration; Social Differences
IDENTIFIERS University of Illinois Chicago

ABSTRACT

This study examined several facets of institutional racism from the vantage point of 32 white male undergraduates at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The focus was on the situation of minorities already enrolled in the institution and on the perceived equity of certain steps taken, or to be taken, to support their academic progress, social adjustment, and competitiveness as job-seekers or graduate school applicants. This qualitative/interpretive study highlighted certain differences in perspective between those who do and those who do not endorse various race-targeted, pro-active initiatives on the part of the institution. Data was gathered by semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with subjects, aged 20 to 35 years. All subjects had substantial full-time or part-time work experience; they were evenly divided between working class/blue collar and professional/managerial families of origin. Support for affirmative action admissions seemed to be associated with a more expansive construction of collective accountability vis-a-vis equality of opportunity. Subjects readily acknowledged the salience of intra-group solidarity to group advancement and were not insensitive to the sense of social dislocation or culture shock that minorities might encounter on a white-majority campus. Actual comments from subjects are included in the report. (Contains 34 references.) (NAV)

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ED 394 429

HOW DOES RACE MATTER?

White Male College Students' Perspectives on Institutional Racism and Affirmative Action

Helen D. Lipson

University of Illinois at Chicago

April, 1996

HE029 123

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Helen D. Lipson

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Are African American and Latino students getting a fair shake from white-majority colleges and universities? Or are these institutions essentially racist?

As institutional racism has typically been conceptualized (e.g. Bunzel, 1991; Cahn, 1993; Hirsch, 1991; Katz, 1983), this is really a three-part question. Are colleges and universities admitting a large enough proportion of blacks and Latinos? Once on campus, do these students tend to encounter special difficulties--alienation or *anomie*; interpersonal racism on the part of white faculty or fellow-students; curricula, teaching styles, or administrative procedures unsuited to the needs of an ethnically diverse student body--special difficulties that, moreover, impede learning, persistence to degree, and effective preparation for employment, graduate school, or adult life in general? Last but not least, to the extent that students of color *do* experience such difficulties, is this the fault of the institutions, or at least something that colleges and universities have an obligation to prevent or remediate?

Complementing extensive media coverage of racial tensions on American college campuses, a substantial body of scholarship has performance differentials between white and minority students; widespread perceptions of a lack of fit between the academic resources and social milieux afforded by white-majority institutions and the needs or expectations of black or Latino students; and relationship between student outcomes, institutional inputs, and other factors, drawing largely on survey data, institutional archives, and the personal accounts of black and Latino students ((e.g. Allen, 1988; Arbona & Novy, 1990; Attinasi, 1989; Cheatham, Slaney & Coleman, 1990; Crosson, 1988; Cunningham & Miller, 1991; Fleming, 1984; Geteles, 1987; Henley, 1990; Levin & Levin, 1991; Lichtman & Ager, 1989; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1985; Mallincrodt, 1988; Nora, 1987; Oliver, Rodriguez & Mickelson, 1985; Richardson & Bender, 1987; Sedlacek, 1987; Thompson, Neville, Weathers, Poston & Atkinson, 1990; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1987; Williams & Leonard, 1988).

A much smaller body of research has addressed white students' views as well of campus racial tensions ((e.g. Bunzel, 1991; McClelland & Auster, 1990), and whites' mixed feelings concerning the justice of affirmative action admissions (e.g. Peterson, 1994; Costantini & King, 1985). Echoing an extensive literature on public attitudes toward affirmative action generally, the latter studies reconfirm a consistent linkage between conservative political and economic perspectives and opposition to marginal preferences on the basis of race[1] but

[1] In the manner of Rosenfeld (1991), I employ the terms *marginal* preferences and marginal equality to refer to the treatment of individuals at a particular point in time, in the context of particular procedures. In the larger scheme of things, of course, it may be argued that blacks and Latinos suffer so many disadvantages in relation to

do not explore in any detail those competing belief systems or ideologies that may support contrasting policy preferences. With "white backlash" holding center stage in the political arena, and both multicultural education and affirmative action in serious jeopardy across the country, it may useful to take a closer look at whites' perspectives on the issues at hand.

The present study examines several facets of institutional racism from the vantage point of 32 white male undergraduates at a large, multi-ethnic, state university campus. Putting aside for the moment the question of fair representation, this research focuses on the situation of minorities already enrolled, and on the perceived equity of certain steps that have been taken, or might be taken, to support their academic progress, social adjustment, and ultimately their competitiveness as job-seekers or graduate school applicants. Largely qualitative/interpretive in its design and execution, the study also highlights certain differences in perspective between those do and do not endorse various race-targeted, pro-active initiatives on the par of the institution.

METHODOLOGY

Data was drawn from semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with 32 unpaid volunteers. Interviewed in the summer of 1992, these men were recruited in the course of a related, mixed-race, mixed-gender survey of about 1600 students enrolled at the University of Illinois at Chicago. A "Research I" campus located about one mile west of Chicago's downtown "Loop" area, UIC draws a student body exceptionally diverse in age and socioeconomic origins as well as ethnicity. An undergraduate enrollment of almost 16,000 during the 1991-92 school year was over 11% black or African American, almost 14% Latino, and over 18% Asian or Asian American (DRIA, 1993).[2]

Three of the subjects were between 29 and 35 years of age, and the balance between 20 and 26; four had served a few years in the military; and all had substantial full-time or part-time work experience. The group was about evenly divided between working class/blue collar and professional/managerial families of origin, and between Chicagoans, Chicago-area suburbanites, and men from other parts of the state or other parts of the country. About a third were "WASP's," more or less, and the balance "white ethnics;" three had immigrated to

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whites that affirmative action merely helps to even the scales, and thus is not preferential in any absolute sense.

[2] Almost 3% of the total undergraduate enrollment were classified simply as "foreign," 3% of "unknown" ethnic origin, and the balance, white or Caucasian.

this country as young children, and two as teenagers.

Data collection would focus on affirmative action admissions and recruiting to graduate professional schools, as well as policies directed toward undergraduates; for this reason, the sample was comprised of 11 pre-meds, 11 MBA prospects, eight men who were seriously considering law school, and two more who anticipated further study in both law and business. This included 10 undergraduate majors in economics or applied business disciplines, 11 natural sciences majors, and eight humanities and social sciences majors, as well as one each in engineering and allied health professions, and one double-major in a business-related discipline and one of the performing arts.

Three of the men had already earned bachelors' degrees but were taking additional undergraduate courses in order to qualify for medical school, including one who was halfway through a second bachelor's degree; the balance of the sample included seven sophomores, 13 juniors, and nine seniors. In their politics, life styles, and world views, the interviews would reveal, the men ranged from socialist or Libertarian, from trade-unionist Democrat to Heritage Foundation Republican, from skeptics to born-again Christians, from the counter-culturalist "slacker" to the fraternity Veep and the driven corporate climber.

Generally two-to-three hours in length, interview was designed to elicit discussion of a number of issues surrounding recent controversies over institutional racism and affirmative action, including the nature of "merit," sources of inequality of academic outcomes between racial groups, the nature and persistence of racism in America, and the putative mission of colleges and universities to promote the common good. Of particular pertinence to the current study was a segment of the interview addressing the subjects' opinions on any "special problems" faced by black and Latino undergraduates at UIC.

I also asked each man to assess several policy options designed to promote greater student-body diversity in medical schools, law schools, or MBA programs. One of these options involved race-targeted initiatives at the undergraduate level designed to enhance motivation, academic performance, anticipatory socialization to various professions, and hence the competitiveness of blacks and Latinos as graduate professional school applicants. Such interventions might involve tutoring in key subject areas, informational meetings with graduate professional school representatives, field trips to area courts, health care facilities, or financial institutions, campus-based or field-based internships, and the like. Taken together with their commentary on life on campus, the subjects' comments on this policy alternative provides a useful window on their attitudes toward race-targeted

undergraduate initiatives generally. To facilitate quantitative analysis of the relationship between policy preferences and perspectives on related issues, each subject was also asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale (from "very acceptable" = 5 to "not at all acceptable" = 1) how acceptable each policy option was to him, and to indicate whether or not he would back such a policy "if you were in charge."

Analysis of the data is largely thematic/interpretive in character, employing numerous selections from the interview transcripts to illustrate the range and nuances of the subjects' perspectives. To preserve their anonymity, subjects are referred to by pseudonyms, and their fields of study identified in general terms like "humanities" or "business" (which in this context embraces economics as well as marketing, finance, and other applied majors). Unless otherwise noted, science majors were pre-med, business majors expected to pursue an MBA, and humanities and social science majors anticipated attending law school, though the latter group were especially likely to be considering other options as well.

While there were no categorical differences in perspective between advocates and opponents of affirmative action interventions, some interesting differences in the frequencies of certain viewpoints did come to light. With respect these comparisons, I identified as "advocates" 19 men who said they would back such a policy, including 12 '5' ratings, 6 '4' ratings, and one noncommittal rating of '3.' The remaining 13 subjects, classified as "opponents," said that they would not back such policies; this included three '3' ratings, six '2' ratings, and four '1's.

As an indication of their overall attitudes toward affirmative action, 14 of these advocates also endorsed affirmative action admissions to graduate professional schools, which was opposed by all but two opponents of the race-targeted programs for undergraduates. Readers wishing to match individual voices with policy preferenes are referred to Appendix A.

While the nature of the sample, the data collection, and the analysis preclude legitimate statistical inferences to a larger population, some descriptive statistics are in an accompanying table. Selected for inclusion in this table were reasonably discrete, clearly defined issues and arguments that were either included in the interview protocol or were brought to the table by a substantial proportion of the subjects, and in relation to which the data lent itself fairly readily to "did he or didn't he" decisions on my part.

FINDINGS

As indicated in Table 1, the interviews yielded a diversity of viewpoints on the college experience, with affirmative action advocates more sympathetic than opponents to arguments that blacks and Latinos endured exceptional obstacles to academic or social integration. Overall, however, there was a good deal of concern for the costs and consequences of certain institutional responses.

In the classroom

Whether due to poverty, the "culture of poverty," or inferior inner-city public schools, there was general agreement that a good many blacks and Latinos arrived on campus were serious academic handicaps that might certainly hamper further progress. 22-year-old Gil Moreaux, a former human-services major who had switched to a business-related discipline, had noticed that "In some [freshman] writing classes...some black students just do not have the grasp of the basics--basic fundamentals. How to conjugate a verb." 29-year-old Larry Dobbs, back in school as a business major after several years in the work force, observed,

> College is actually the easy part [of one's education], 'cause you got all the basic skills in [grade school and high school]. Then [in college] you really start to explore things and look at things. But if you're struggling with your basic algebra, how can you understand the basic math concepts of economics? If you're really working hard to put a sentence together, how can you understand literature--what it means, you know? So all those things; if you're reading at a 5th-grade level, how can you do your assignments at night? . . . When I was in...my last economics class, I had a girl was in two of my classes, and we used to sit together, and she'd just never get it. We used to sit and have counseling sessions after every class, we sat for an hour, and I found that the most--the things that she was deficient on were things that *I* knew in high school, and that if you didn't know those...simple, basic things, the rest of the course just didn't come into focus. And the professor had no time to take this one person and do [what Larry was doing]. I feel that once you start behind and you're in college, there's no way you can catch up. There's no way you can...learn the basics of the course *and* at the same time review what you should have known in the first place.

About a third of the subjects, however, felt that cultural biases in course content, instructional styles, and so forth might well present further difficulties to black or Latino undergraduates. "Especially in the liberal arts," 21-year-old humanities major John Kuchma suggested, "where you deal with a lot of humanities and things like that. And race kind of colors any subject there. And I think maybe a lot of times, like, professors are insensitive to that." Another humanities major, 21-year-old Hal Voorhees, compared the minority experience at UIC to what he himself might experience "if I walked into, you know, an all-girls school...I think, you know, maybe there'd be a female perspective on everything; then I would feel somewhat disenfranchised."

Theo Berglund had flunked out of college years before, a casualty of the '60's and '70's drug culture.

TABLE 1: Perspectives on Institutional Racism and Related Issues among 18 Advocates and 14 Opponents of Race-targeted Interventions with Undergraduates

	ADVOCATES	OPPONENTS
[a] Felt that one or more aspects of the undergraduate experience at UIC--as distinct from deficient preparation in high school--would likely help to suppress minority GPAs and/or graduate admissions test scores	**10 (56%)**	**4 (29%)**
Cited special challenges to the academic integration and blacks and Latinos undergraduates	**17 (94%)**	**9 (64%)**
Lesser performance in college linked to inferior high school preparation	16 (89%)	8 (57%)
[a] More likely to have problems adjusting to white/college-level teaching styles/classroom environments/academic policies	12 (67%)	0 (0%)
Cited special challenges to the social integration of blacks and Latino undergraduates	**16 (84%)**	**11 (79%)**
Likely to feel out of place	6 (33%)	6 (43%)
[a] Likely to experience racial hostility from whites	13 (72%)	9 (64%)
Qualified the severity and/or distinctiveness of white-on-black or white-on-Latino racism on campus	**6 (33%)**	**14 (100%)**
Blacks and/or Latinos over-state/over-react to racism	3 (17%)	11 (79%)
Racism "goes both ways;" blacks and Latinos just as hostile or discriminatory to whites as the other way around	4 (22%)	8 (57%)
Inter-ethnic hostility on campus multidirectional, i.e., among different white ethnic groups as well as between whites and blacks or Latinos	1 (6%)	6 (43%)
[a] Racism comparable to experiences of white ethnics	**4 (22%)**	**7 (50%)**
White-on-black prejudice and discrimination comparable to what white ethnics experienced in the past	1 (6%)	5 (36%)
White-on-Latino prejudice and discrimination comparable to what white ethnics experienced in the past	4 (22%)	7 (50%)
[a] Affirmed the obligation of higher education to advance social justice in the larger society	**16 (89%)**	**7 (50%)**
Endorsed for colleges and universities generally	11 (61%)	4 (29%)
Endorsed for public institutions only	5 (28%)	3 (21%)

[a] Reflects responses to specific either-or-or/yes-or-no questions on this particular issue, as well as instances where the issue was raised by the subject. Counts reflect unequivocal affirmative responses; instances of "maybe" or "don't know" not included.

Now a 35-year-old pre-nursing student giving some thought to medical school, he drew a connection between a textbook anecdote about classroom cultures and his own experience of American blacks.

> The students would say things, make comments, on the lecture as the lecture was being given. The teacher thought this was unruly behavior that indicated a bad intention and everything else....[But] these were Hawaiian students, and they would be considered *bad* in their culture if they *didn't* do that. If they just sat and listened, they would be considered morons. . . . My own personal experience [of this]...is people in, uh, especially blacks, in these evangelical type church settings, you know, where they're all--constantly the preacher is going on and the people are going, "Yeah! Yeah! Say it! Let me hear it!". . . And another [issue] is the whole language and syntax and whatnot differences...because the inner city language thing is different.

25-year-old business major Peter Czarposny had already experienced considerable culture shock a decade earlier, after immigrating to Chicago from Eastern Europe. In his view, some cultural disadvantages to minority students in majority-majority classrooms was inescapable.

> It's part of the cultural--it's part of the style of the classroom and the culture. I cannot expect every time/my [Scandinavian-American] wife of two years saying something to me, to completely understand *her*. Because she *does* come from a different cultural background, even though...I do have pretty good command of the English language, I still do not understand. . . . Some of my...friends...maybe, like, 6th, 7th generation Americans, that would say something to me, and I would have to sit there and think, "Now, what did that person mean when that person said that?"

Most of those interviewed, however, considered college-level instruction as they knew it to be ethnically neutral in terms of its influence on students' performance. 21-year-old science major Doug Benedetto commented,

> At the college level, I think everything get's all clumped together, everything's the same. . . . You know, I mean, in class there's a black sittin' on this side and Latin Americans sittin' on this side, we're all listenin' to the same professor, we're all takin' his tests.

Gil argued,

> I don't think there's anything to [allegations of cultural bias]. Because they're teaching facts. You know, two and two is four to the white student and two plus two is four to the black student....They're teaching facts, they're not teaching opinions. Well, hopefully not."

25-year-old business major Bob Smith told me,

> I don't think that [blacks and Latinos are] being treated any differently. . . . I'm sure I could excel just as well at a predominantly black school as I could here. . . . I had a black accounting professor, and what I can see, it would be no different than the way a white accounting professor would teach the course....I don't know how differently you can teach accounting....A course that's in, uh/I don't know, maybe a course that dealt more--a marketing course, maybe a consumer behavior course. They mention the fact that certain products are marketed to blacks, and...certain companies are looking into marketing to ethnic, um, sections more aggressively, but...I don't think their teaching style would be influenced any.

26-year-old Dave Zaluba had earned an associate degree in electronics technology before majoring in

science at UIC; in his view,

> Learning knowledge is learning knowledge, reading a book is reading a book, memorizing something is memorizing something...If you can say that this white--that the way they teach is based towards the white people, and makes it harder for the black people, you're saying that these people's *minds* must be different. . . You can't have a lecture for blacks and a lecture for whites. I don't think it's that much different, you know?...And I don't think there's that much difference in the way people *process* things, you know . . . I think there's different *methods* of teaching, but not...based on *cultural* groups.

Brian Versace, a 23-year-old who had migrated from the College of Business to the humanities, did not discount the relevance of cultural differences to classroom performance, but felt that biculturalism might actually work in blacks' and Latinos' favor.

> Actually, in certain situations, they have an advantage....
> It seems to be that we're taught Western Civ, you know, and everyone's expected to know this, and those are, like, based on white culture...that is what [blacks and Latinos] were taught in grade school and high school--but they also have the knowledge of their own black culture or their own Hispanic culture. 'Cause that's--actually, they know a little bit more than we do, 'cause they have that interest enough to do it themselves.

Or, as 21-year-old business major Mel Gibran observed, minorities' perceptions of their own marginal status might help to motivate superior achievement.

> A couple of blacks that I've met [at UIC]...just seemed to be very serious and, like, goal-oriented--they want to, you know, understand and everything. And I mean actually that--I kind of liked that, you know, it's very, I mean, they're actually *more* serious than, like, a lot of the [white] students that I even hang around with....They're very focused...they're, like, tunnel vision type thing, which, you know, I have [myself]...and...I admire that....Maybe that's...because...[people] expect minority students not to do as well as non-minority students, and these people are so focused [on] proving them wrong. Because that's--I'm motivated by, you know, like, when somebody tells me I can't do something, I *wanna* do it, and I just wanna say, "Here, take that," you know.

Regardless of one's race, moreover, instructional efficacy and accessibility was inevitably a mixed bag. Pat Gahegan, a 20-year-old social science major, was succinct: "They have just as much chance to fall asleep as I do." Hal recalled

> I've, uh, encountered professors, and I'm not sure where they're coming from sometimes...or they have this annoying habit of getting off on tangents or whatever. You know, and my grades have suffered because of that.

Mel agreed,

> Some professors might be very demanding, but at the same time very explicit in their requirements. Whereas others, they've been good professors, but, you know, just--they're difficult to deal with, they're hard to talk to, um, their tests are impossible....you have to kind of adapt yourself to their methods so you can end up gettin' the better grade....It's an experience you went through, I mean, you deal with it, and you got through it.

College life

With respect to college life outside the classroom as well, one had to consider the experience of minorities in a comparative context. To John, a certain sense of displacement seemed to go with the territory. "To just--the general feeling that I don't belong here, that can--I've seen plenty of kids feeling that they don't belong here just because they're far away from home, and drop out or flunk out."

UIC is a commuter school, its patchy lawns and self-proclaimed "brutalist" architecture cheek-by-jowl with an eight-lane expressway and a public housing project. Attracting more than its share of transfers and working students, the university was less likely than most, it seemed, to generate a sense community among those enrolled. Asked if they had gotten to know any blacks or Latinos at UIC, the majority of the men interviewed said that they hadn't spent enough time on campus to make any friends at all.

23-year-old Jeff Buchanan, for example, was already supporting a wife and two children. The social science major explained that he hadn't made more than one or two friends at UIC "because of having to work full time, you know, I'm in and out real quick." The pre-med curriculum and a job in a research lab lengthened Dave's hours on campus, but this had had few social consequences.

> During lecture, you don't really get to *talk* to many people 'cause you're watching the lecture....You tend to meet people in your labs, and then when you're *in* lecture, you tend to sit with them....But if there is no lab, I--every now and then, you do get to--you meet people, and you tend to, like, sit next to the person throughout the rest of the [term], and, um, you just, you know, you just talk to them in the hall, and you don't really get close to the people there, you know?

Joe Murtaugh, 23, had grown up in a tight-knit community on Chicago's far south side; his *anomie* as a transfer student had propelled him toward a second major.

> I joined the [business major] club. Nobody knows anybody's name in that club. . . . . People come here, they take their classes, and they're out of here at 10:30[a.m.], you know....The nationals [of his fraternity at the school previously attended] contacted me, they wanted me to get a fraternity [chapter] started here, and--I don't think so. . . . The rest of the country would look at [UIC's fraternity chapters] and go, you aren't a fraternity, you know. If there's no physical building, there's no identity. Having a table across the street over at [the student union] is *not* a place to belong, you know? Playing a couple of football games does not make a unity, you know; mostly those are just drinking buddies, there's not more of a unity beyond that. But being involved in [an applied arts discipline] gave a chance to meet people, and people were friendly over there, you know. You'd walk in, "Oh, what's your name," you know, and you'd be meeting people every day. Whereas in the _____ department, you know, you meet the guy sittin' next to you in class...and you know the teacher's name, and you know the person the teacher always talks to, and you might know four people in a class.

Whether blacks of Latinos were *more* alienated than whites was an open question. Through his African-American girlfriend, John had gotten to know a good many students of color.

> At some schools, they'd be such an extreme minority that it might be quite ostracizing to even go to school there, and then of course there's an effect on their performance. Here, I think they do fine. I think there might not have been any problems because they probably tend to stick together--you know, just like white people'll stick together.

Likewise, Jeff felt that

> If there was, I mean, you know, maybe a group of ten blacks in a school of 16,000 students, you know, then I could see there'd be a problem. Because if--you'd really feel outside of everything that's going on, and, uh, I can see where it would be a mental or emotional problem and--yeah.

Over a third of my subjects, however, recognized that blacks and Latinos might well experience a sense of dislocation that went well beyond the sort of cultural barriers to classroom learning cited earlier. Perhaps because blacks and Latinos were less well represented in the natural sciences, Dave saw things quite differently from John. "There's not as many blacks to socialize with....[so] it's harder for them, because...whites can get togetner in their groups, and study and communicate and share ideas, and that helps them. The blacks, they don't have such a big community to gather with." To Bob, the experience of blacks and Latinos at UIC

> would be sort of, like, if I were to put...myself into a situation where I went to a predominantly black school, I think there would be a little bit more/difficult to interact in an open way. I don't know why, I guess it's because it's a different environment, I mean, different type of people would--I'd just assume offhand that they wouldn't understand my background or whatever...and I think somehow that would probably be difficult. . . . Maybe [blacks or Latinos] *don't* have as many people of their background as they'd like to have, in order to have it be a more social experience.

With no little experience adapting to new environments, Theo nonetheless drew an analogy between the minority experience on a majority white campus and study in a foreign country.

> I think if I went to France and went to college, I'd have a hell of a time, even though I speak French fairly well. . . . If [blacks and Latinos are] feeling very uncomfortable, out of place, or putting a lot of effort--at least a certain amount of effort into [that], rather than studying and paying attention in class and what not, then that would be a problem.

Peter had no need to speculate.

> I recognize how special a problem it was for *me*, and not only the language....Most Latinos and blacks, other minorities that are admitted at University of Illinois, or at any other higher education school, will have enough knowledge of the language, enough command of the language, to get by....But the cultural difference is very hard. One/always finds him- or herself/to feel pretty awkward whenever the environment is different than what the person's used to. The manner of speaking, the tone of voice in conversations, the way people look at each other, the way people dress, the way people do things--everything is different. At entry level, it is pretty hard for *everybody* at the university level. . . And especially for those black and Latinos that come from predominantly black or predominantly Latino high schools. Where they have probably never had a other-than-own background students in the classroom, now they come to a university that is so diverse, that covers almost every country from the globe....It *might* be harder. I think it is one thing that each student has to brace him- or herself when they start an education at a university. . . . [and in particular] the way *things work* in a university, the way you have to go to...Admissions and Registration in order to register for a course. And the way that you even have to approach a professor or an instructor. . . . I think that there would be a bit

> harder for *any* student...if the student did not have any training, or did not have any experience, in *change*. If things were so constant in their life that they did not experience much change at all, the period of adjustment...is that much harder for whoever....Things in [the black and Latino] communities are pretty *constant*, and they do not endeavor out of their community too much.

Steve Dykstra, a 24-year-old social science major, also considered things from several angles.

> Maybe [blacks and Latinos are] just not privy to the information that whites would be, and maybe they just don't feel like [a white-majority campus is] a world in which they can be accepted--as readily accepted as whites. . . . If I put myself into that position--into the position of going to a school that is--has a large majority of a certain race [other than white], I think I would feel uncomfortable. I mean, if I suddenly decided to enroll in Grambling, I'd feel extremely uncomfortable, I think. And so I can understand, from that standpoint, why they would feel a bit of difficulty . . . And just, I mean, and then, you know, also, that just raises problems with speaking out in class, I think. You know, feeling secure in their environment, which had--you know, if you feel completely secure in an environment, I think that that brings out the most in a person. That's when you--when someone *is* the most productive. And so, you know, yeah, maybe, you know--well, not "maybe," I think they *are* at a disadvantage from that viewpoint.

Fears about "being accepted," moreover, were not unfounded. There was general agreement that at UIC, at least, encounters were racist faculty were quite unlikely; but two thirds of those interviewed felt that students of color students of color were likely to encounter some degree of racial hostility from their white classmates.

Racism

22-year-old Glenn Brzenko, a business major and full-time consulting firm staffer who was headed for law school as well as a master's in economics or business, had encountered hard-core, "old-fashioned" racism on a different campus in another midwestern state.

> It was quite a learning experience. . . . Three white students wore their grandfathers' Ku Klux Klan outfits to the [local public] high school . . . and...they got into a fight with a couple--or, one in particular black student, and the Ku Klux Klan got hold of this, and they--they came down for a major demonstration. Uh, most of the [KKK] members in the Midwest were there, including the Grand Wizard, who lives in Indiana. So there was a--it was quite an experience for the whole university. . . They just marched through the main street, and they lit their torches and, you know, did their big ceremonies, had their speeches . . . And, I mean, they're not just racist against blacks; they're racist against many different ethnic groups And I think often--up until that point, I thought that [race relations were] *much* better than it was, uh--it was a real eye-opener for me. So, yeah, I still see it occasionally...Just with the whole Rodney King thing, I didn't realize that there was so much racial tension in California.

On a Chicago campus, most of my subjects agreed, racism was tended to be more subtle, but no less resilient. Andy Suppelsa, a 22-year-old social science major headed toward an MBA, was candid:

> I guess, uh, if you're gonna be here for four years, and you're a member of a minority, yeah, I think at some point, something's going to happen. I think it's gonna--maybe a major incident, maybe a minor incident, but I don't see how you couldn't, I--[how] it *couldn't* happen.

Marc Metcalf, a 21-year-old sciences major, commented on the racial climate of the surrounding neighborhood, which had seen both UIC and the housing project eminent-domained out of the heart of Chicago's

Little Italy. He remembered seeing

> a couple of black kids over there on Taylor Street that were walking on the street, and one of the Italian older men kicked 'em off the street and told 'em to walk on the other side. . . . The people down here--well, these people have lived here all their lives, and they don't like to see blacks in their neighborhood.

From his perspective as a some-time union organizer, Theo considered that white racism on campus might have serious consequences for black or Latino achievement

> by unnerving you...or by drawing your attention toward organizing...I mean, if you see that sort of thing, the tendency is to want to join an organization against it, or to *form* an organization against it. Or to do *something*....It takes time to do political organizing.

Several men, however, did not see UIC or other college campuses as fertile ground for racism. "It seems like prejudice and racism are just so taboo," Steve argued, "and that this--I think the people on this campus are extremely politically correct from my experience. I don't think [racist incidents] would happen." Jeff's did not make too fine a distinction between what he *wanted* to see and what was there.

> You know, I mean, but, uh, I would hope that people at this level are fairly free-thinkers and, uh, and are able to--to look past the person's color to the core of the person. It's not true all the time, but I would like to *think* that they were--they would do that, and there wouldn't be those--those prejudices.

Bob was a little more evenhanded.

> Oh, they have encountered [racism] here. But the incidents, I think, were really blown out of proportion. And how often and how many times it has happened. It's going to happen . . . [but] the predomination of the university student is more of a broad-minded person than of a narrow-minded, so I think that, uh, within the university, the people attending and the faculty, I think [blacks and Latinos would] be less likely to--at any university, I think they'd be less likely to be subjected to--to become victims of racial prejudice than outside the university.

Larry stressed UIC's *relative* tolerance, at least on the surface.

> I went to another [college] that had a lot worse than this one did. This one, I think, simply because of the fact it's so diverse that...anyone who comes here has to already have probably accepted the fact--though they may not like, or they may have their own personal biases--but not to be overtly racist, because it's not like--it's more of a even-steven type deal, okay, it's not like four black students and 150 white students.

Nick DiLeo, a 22-year-old science major, Nick agreed,

> There's been a few incidents in the dorms in the past couple years. Um, you know, like, people name-calling and this and that, everywhere. But I think this campus is a lot more tolerant than other campuses...that my friends go to . . . Just because we're in this--where we are...in the city, it's accessible to so many different neighborhoods, and it's not expensive, and you don't have to go away, you can commute, so it's kind of like a big melting pot.

Others faulted minority *perceptions* of racism. Mike Wojkowski, a 25-year-old business major, felt that

> A lot of the problems, even though there may be disputes between whites and either black or

latinos, I wouldn't call those a racial issue. Because one of the sides must have been offended by the other, and I don't think it has anything to do with race. It would have happened between two whites.

Several men were concerned with what they regarded as hypersensitivity on the part of blacks. Steve observed,

> I think sometimes, like--I mean, say, I'm walking through the door and someone bumps into me, I say, "Watch it." I mean, I might, you know, "Get out of my way," or whatever, I'd say that to a white person just as I would say that to a black person, but a black person might take it as a racist comment.

Joe had first-hand experience with what he viewed as trumped-up claims of racial bias.

> I've been accused of being a racist....Blew my mind. Blew my mind....It was convenient. With a girl, when she was trying to pull a game....She was very difficult. It turns out she had major head problems, tied more on. She was in a [production] I was directing. And I wound up dropping her from the cast, and she was completely psycho. She later attacked one of the [performers] with a weapon, and cut up her face. . . . She accused me of being a racist.

Two subjects alluded to an incident that had been front-page news in the student newspaper.

> Greek Week '92 erupted into controversy on Wednesday...when Caucasian members of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity painted their faces black and portrayed Ray Charles and other African-American artists during a lip sync contest....Another performance, by sorority Gamma Gamma Gamma of "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" [which] portrayed a sleeping lion with three dancing monkeys singing back-up to a bird, while a gorilla did harmony...won a second place award, but some [African-American] students found it offensive. (Vargas, 1992)

Already a card-carrying conservative, Glenn blamed the media and the government.

> Well, for instance, with those white students from the fraternity that did a lip sync and painted themselves up. Such a major issue was made out of that by faculty and by the board and by the newspaper that I can see racial tensions from, you know, being out of that, when it was just an innocent thing.

Marc agreed, neighborhood tensions not withstanding.

> Well, [blacks and Latinos] *say* they [experience racism on campus]. . . . You know, you read all the *Campus Chronicles*, and they always have black people crabbin' about being racially, you know. . . I think it's just their perception, because [everybody] who works here, just about, at this university is black, and I don't think that, you know, I just don't think that with the population of black people--civil servants, I should say, working for this university, that there's too many white people to be discriminating against blacks here. And I just think that it's a thing, you know, if something happens to one person and all of 'em band together and it's a whole racial incident.

The interviews evoked considerable discussion regarding the fall-out from what many viewed as exaggerated perceptions of racism. On one hand, such misconceptions were seen to foster a level of defeatism that might be more of a constraint on minority achievement than racism itself. Greg Bogosian, a 20-year-old business major and prospective lawyers, had observed,

> They've just given up. It's like, well, "Hey, I'm black," you know? It's almost like--if you've ever seen the *In Living Color* [television] show where it says, "the Man," and the Man is always the *white* man. You know, its a spoof against white-dominated society. But, you know, at least in their spoof, the black person hasn't given up and he's always fighting against the Man....you now, he's trying to succeed.

Steve commented,

> I think very often minorities assume prejudice, and so don't, uh, don't try. I saw a show on [PBS'] Channel 11, it was produced by a black woman, and you saw--it was about an area that's similar to South Central L.A. or whatever, in Boston. She was talking to the black kids...you know, they were just hanging out in this youth center....Well, they were talking about not having jobs, and how angry they were, and she said, "Well, have you looked?" and they said, "No," and she said, "Why not? Some white boy's gonna get the job." So, I mean, I think in a way minorities are *assuming* prejudice, when perhaps it's not even there, and that hinders their progress.

In the military, Mike had encountered a milieu in which interpersonal racism had not been vanquished, but institutional racism was in his view a thing of the past.

> In the [military]...I saw that there were plenty of minorities who were treated exactly the same as I was, 'cause in the military, everybody's equal; there actually is no affirmative action in the military, at least that I saw....so it was really up to the individual to pursue his own interest and motivation. . . . I think it made me less in favor...of affirmative action, because I saw that everybody could be given an equal amount of opportunity, but there's still so many people that won't take advantage of it. I also saw a lot of racism in the military. But a lot of [minorities] complained that they weren't being given a fair shake in relation to the majority. That wasn't the case at all. It's just that there's some people that don't take advantage of opportunities that other people take advantage of. . . . I don't know what the reason would be. They feel that they've been left out, but I feel it's their own fault.

On the other hand, white racism might really be on the upswing *as a consequence of* false accusations. In Gil's view,

> [Blacks] make it a problem when they make it sound like they're being abused and then they go on the news and they say, "Oh, here we are at UIC being, uh, discriminated against."...The overt racism is more of a backlash....Last year, for example...a friend of mine lived on campus, and she was accused of being racist because her roommate was black and she didn't always get the phone messages so, um, that meant [the white roommate] was a racist....And I hung around with her....And so I was accused of being a racist, um, some people started yelling, "Racist!" and they threw eggs at us....I felt more like *I* was being the one who was discriminated against. . . . Most of my friends...are very sick and tired of being accused of racism, and they have a very negative attitude towards black people. I know, I can say for myself, I'm very sick and tired...of, you know, being blamed for a lot of people's problems because I'm white.

Whites could not be faulted, moreover, for responding in kind to what several men saw as "reverse racism." Brian observed,

> You see graffiti and that's pretty much unavoidable, and probably any university in the nation, you would see something like that. From all points of view....Obviously ...if somebody writes KKK, a white person wrote it. Or from, you know, "Die, white scum!" or something, obviously a white person *didn't* write it.

Living close to campus,

> I see racism in the reverse way...almost every day....I live in the neighborhood [of the university], you know. I go to [the] Jewel [supermarket], and sometimes it's expected of *me*, because someone's black or something, that I should give them some sort of special advantage. See, that's the other side. I see that more, to tell you the truth, than I see, um, white racial discrimination against black.

At the first university Joe had attended,

> I did a lot of stuff with...a black fraternity, and I almost joined them. I had black roommates and I was, you know, the white guy. My name was "Mighty White.". . . One of the reasons why I left [there]--well, I'd say the biggest reason why I left--was, uh/I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and I ended up spending a couple of days in the hospital; somebody beat the hell out of me for being a white guy.

Dave was especially disturbed by what he perceived as a double standard concerning white and black racism..

> Because there's been a lot of prejudice against [the blacks], they tend to take it and almost *amplify* it, because everybody talks about, oh, yeah, this person is discriminated against. But they don't talk about what the blacks discriminate against the whites....I've heard many times that only whites can discriminate...can be racist....Not that they shouldn't say [that there is] discrimination against them. But it seems like they almost teach it to their kids that they are being discriminated against, and they're being oppressed, and there's a conspiracy [against them]. . . . I won't say all, I would say 95% of most resentment that I have--or discrimination that I have seen, is more in the area of upset about the black attitude toward the white. . . . [When] Jimmy the Greek . . . [said] something like, they're better at sports because through evolution...because of slavery or whatever, because...they're more flexible because they have that extra tendon...he was fired from his job and everything, and criticized *immensely*. He didn't say anything about how bad blacks are, that we should go out and kill blacks. And here [Sister Solja] goes out and says how [blacks] should kill whites. Regardless of what context she meant it in--she's saying, "Oh, I didn't mean to," like, but still she said it. And here is this rap star, you know--talking about role models, you know, well, there's another role model saying, "Go out and kill whites." And she is *defended* for it....I think a lot of actual prejudice against blacks is actually the counter, um, prejudice...where white Americans are being persecuted for *being* white Americans. And a lot of people are...saying, Enough! Enough!

Assessing the special difficulties of blacks and Latino students, however, one had also to take into account a larger pattern of inter-group tensions on campus. Not unlike similar campuses in other cities, perhaps, UIC's polyglot commuter population lent itself to some serious rivalries among different categories of white ethnics. The only incident "of major importance" that Peter could recall of overt, physical, interethnic conflict was "between the Palestinians and the Jewish community, where the riot police had to come on campus." Marc shared some first-hand observations,

> The only thing I've ever been a part of on this campus that was racially motivated was at a Palestinian birthday party--or an Israeli birthday party--and I was [employed by the university as] a bodyguard to one of the shahs who came in. . . . It wasn't really a bodyguard, we just had to sit on stage and make sure none of these Palestinian people charged the stage . . . And then they came outside and there was all these Palestinians chanting and they're all wearing turbans and dark sun glasses and they were throwing rocks.

But it was not just the Jews and Palestinians. 23-year-old science-major Bill Cusack--like Mike, a

veteran and a prospective MBA--directed my attention to

> Ali that stuff you see over at the [Chicago] Circle [Center]...You've got the Palestinians on one side, the Jews on the other . . . Well, you go over there some time--it's usually in the fall, when they got all the newbies, all the little freshmen and everything, you know, which I was last year, but--and, uh, they got nine or ten different ethnic groups there trying to recruit everyone, you know. . . I've had a couple of [white supremacist groups] try to recruit me 'cause of my [blond, flat-top] haircut. It's just kind of funny, 'cause one time the PLO--some sort of Palestinian organization, and it was a Jewish organization about two booths away from 'em. I though they were gonna start throwing Molotov cocktails at each other. It's just kind of funn--it was actually kind of nice to see that everyone would get their two cents in, but/"

Greg as well had observed the same multiplicity of ethic rivalries, though luckily for him--"There's not an Armenian *anything* on this campus"--he had apparently found safe haven.

> You know, it goes both ways, there is just as much black racism against whites as there is white against black. . . . I've seen, you know, not explicit, where somebody says, you know, you're white, you're not welcome. But, you know, if you've ever gone over to Inner Circle [a restaurant/lounge area at Chicago Circle Center], you can see it's very cliquish. There's, like, certain parts of the room where you just--if you're not black, you just don't sit in. And vice versa. I mean, you know, if you're not white--generally, if you're not Polish--which I'm not, but, you know, I just happen to be part of the group--If you're not Polish, there's, like, that certain area that I sit in where it's almost, like, everybody, like, looks at you funny . . . And then, along the entire wall, you know, like, then 90% who are just Hispanic, Latino. And then, you know, you've got--just, like, on the opposite side, you've got the--I don't want to say Palestinian, but the Middle Eastern ethnic groups sitting over there. . . I mean, it's something that, like, an anthropologist or a sociologist would, like, love.

23-year-old Adam Bledsoe, a prospective JD/MBA, was an especially thoughtful observer. A veteran and a "Navy brat" who had spent his childhood either abroad or in the South, Adam was majoring in business and had been active in UIC's student government.

> *Every* person here [at UIC] is likely to encounter [inter-ethnic hostility], not just centered around black and Latino. Black and Latino experience it between themselves, between whites, whites feel it from black and Latino, and every other sex and ethnic background that you have on campus--everyone. . . . A lot of times, what I find is that--a more hesitancy for white people . . . to feel more of a racial bias, to some extent, than it is for blacks, though I'm seen it go both ways....But it seems to me that blacks do not feel it as much on this campus, because blacks on this campus are vocal, they are more aggressive and asserting themselves as having rights that they have because they're human, and not because of their color. . . . Everybody has segregated themselves so much on this campus, everyone is open, I think, to an equal extent. . . A prime example is Irish and Lithuanians here in Chicago. . . . I've seen it on campus with Lithuanians and Italians. To some extent; not to the large extent that I'm seen it between blacks and whites. . . . They didn't come to fisticuffs or anything. But there have been some resentment towards people. And I think--that's why I say that's there's so many segmentations, Polish, Lithuanian, Palestinian, Jewish, black, Latino.

All things considered, then, white-on-black or white-on-Latino racism was not nearly as *special* a problem as some might think. Affirmative action advocates, however, were likely to view racism in a somewhat different light. Taking the long view, for example, they were less likely than opponents to equate white-on-black

or white-on-Latino racism to historic discrimination against various categories of white ethnics. And while several affirmed the *relative* subtlety of contemporary racism at UIC, they nonetheless validated relatively intense reactions to it, and took more seriously than most opponents the effects of any sort of racism on academic outcomes. Larry, for one, did not find it very consoling that at his school, racism was

> mainly more covert, more secretive, more writing on the bathroom walls, leaving little notices here and there, those kinds of things. Not walking down the hallway and saying, "Get out of my way, nigger." You're not gonna see that. But you will see covert-type bathroom type things, where people are in a closed stall and they can write the little things down they think . . . And it deals mainly with black [male] members or white members, the size of the p---s. It's amazing. . . I look at it and I say, "How do you want to be known?"

Even more subtle affronts might understandably draw intense reactions. "I think they're more sensitive" to the racist implications of certain interchanges than whites are, John observed, "and I think a lot of white people don't understand it, 'cause they haven't gone through it." Larry explained,

> As result of their, uh--of the cultural--the stereotypes that are thrust upon them as children, when they come to college, it's like the little man syndrome, I mean, they feel like they're being--even when they're not being segregated or being prejudiced against...they feel like they are. And that comes from them being--having it done to them so many times, they become over-sensitive to it....So when they get to college--I feel that [blacks] are hostile...
> because, when you're on the defensive and you're sensitive to things, you're hostile against people around you. It goes back to that [fraternity lip sync] skit...Anything that can possibly be looked at as being--because they feel everyone--I don't know, I shouldn't say that--they feel that a large majority of the white population *is* prejudiced against them.

Mel emphasized,

> It might not always be, you know...stated outright...but, you know, I'm sure they feel it, you know--looks, things like that--because...some black people tell me, you know, about certain things that, you know, offend them and everything like that. . . . I think [racism at UIC] would probably be one of those indirect things....It wouldn't be, like, maybe somebody gave you a look or something like that, because you're a minority student, and you go home and, like, you know, feel sorry for yourself the rest of the semester and have horrible grades. But, I mean, I'm sure there is, like, you know, a lot, like, indirectly, it probably affects somebody. Even, you know, psychologically, I mean, things bother people. Things that I've encountered have bothered me, and, I mean, I can't say they affected my grades or affected any aspect of my life. Maybe, then again, they did, and I guess I never realized it.

Dave once again quoted percentages.

> Just one act of discrimination could very much affect everybody. In other words, like, if I walked through a campus that was mostly black...actually, even if we were in the majority and they were racist, perpetrated racist acts against some whites....just walking around through a group of blacks and all that, you would feel [hostility]...Even if...there were...[just] 10% that might be problems, you walk in front of [any of] them...you know that, like, some of those people have so much hateful thoughts and bad thoughts, and that makes you uncomfortable, that makes you not want to be there...it's not a good thing.

Institutional accountability

With disparate views on the college experience of their black and Latino classmates, the men I talked with tended to agree, nonetheless, that race-targeted remedies were in some respects, at least, problematic, taking into account their ethical and social costs, as well the financial burdens they might place on the institution.

While race-targeted programs for undergraduates won a few more endorsements than affirmative action admissions to graduate professional schools, some my subjects found the former more troubling. Affirmative action admissions was essentially changing the rules for what nonetheless remained the *selective* distribution of access. But campus programs that picked and chose among members of the institution's own constituency of enrolled students was something else again.

Some of these programs were seen to involve the distribution of information or remediation that most whites would not need, or could readily obtain elsewhere; but other initiatives seemed to go further. Engaged to a law student, Adam had heard about

> affirmative action programs even *inside* law schools here in Chicago that are offered to minority students, that are not opened up to white students. Things like, you have private tutors. You have special meeting sessions with professors. That is not fair to the student that is already at the same level as a black student.

Testing the limits of every student's capacities, perhaps law schools' efforts to "level the playing field" were especially likely to raise the specter of reverse discrimination. Pat brother-in-law had

> asked for help. And to go into the study groups. But because he was white, he was not allowed [by the law school], until he failed. . . . The white students there just did their own thing. . . . And he had gone to [some of the voluntary, self-run white study groups], but when he started having more individual problems and you're falling behind, you can't drag those other people along with you.

As a person with dyslexia, Joe had had considerable difficulties obtaining appropriate services and accommodations himself, both at UIC and at previous schools attended. Endorsing some forms of affirmative action admissions, he had little patience with race-targeted initiatives that might offer blacks or Latinos immediate advantages in the job market.

> Nobody walks around saying, "Oh, poor boy. You know, we're gonna test you at a different time, or can he--," you know, "Your grade was a little bit low, I'm gonna set you up with this internship with this company, that's gonna help you get a job later on. It's gonna be a *paying* internship, did I mention that?" There's all these special benies. . . . If I'm able to say, I had an internship, that means something to a business when I go in there [as a job applicant]....Going on a field trip, It's a different experience, you know. This [black or Latino] guy gets to spend a weekend, you know, at some accounting firm, he's gonna be up a little bit, he's gonna meet people while he's there.

In terms of academic support services, special treatment might easily stigmatize those it targeted, or even

get in the way of their progress. 25-year-old Sam Turner, a school teacher and "post-bac" pre-med at the time of his interview, recalled

> My experience with the special programs at the college that I attended [as an undergraduate]. Pretty soon, what happens was that these people were going to these special classes for minority students to basically have their homework done, and they don't see it, that that's a rip-off for them, they're not getting what they should out of the college experience.

One reason Brian looked more favorably on race-targeted outreach to school children was that this would at least preserve marginal equality *at a given site*. While he did not withhold approval from race-targeted programs on campus, he felt that "it's inviting problems. You know, little things here and there...What is gonna--what if I wanna go, too, and I'm not Latino?" By contrast, outreach to the Chicago public schools

> could target, say, specific schools where the higher minority population is, but everyone still participates. Say, you were to take a sophomore or junior class out, but instead of going to [well-to-do, north-suburban] Winnetka . . . go down to, you know, [inner-city, largely Latino] Juarez High School, where they're not necessary picking . . . specific people out of their group . . . but the group just happens to be Latino. . . . It's not racial, you know, picking and choosing.

From a financial perspective, however, affirmative action on or campus would entail a race-targeted redistribution: And that was a problem.

The bottom line

Greg's principle difficulty with the kinds of interventions discussed in the interview was that this would be "something that was *paid for* by . . . tuition from whites, blacks, Spanish, and everybody else." Adam likewise observed,

> I think you're taking away from one particular body to give to another one. . . . I think I was lukewarm on [most types of racially-targeted programs for undergraduates] because the pool of resources that that comes out of is a pool of resources that is allocated to everyone.

No one argued that these kinds of services were unncessary; but there were serious objections to the redistribution of *collective funds* toward programs with *restricted-access on the basis of race.*

On one hand, there was a general perception that whatever special disadvantages of black and Latino students suffered, this was largely a function of socioeconomic background, and not race alone. Therefore, blacks and Latinos of middle-class origins might be inappropriate beneficiaries. Hal was especially forthright:

> Before I say *which* [affirmative action admissions] policy I would prefer, there is a *problem* I see with racial set-asides....It's intended--I believe it's intended to help less--you know, those people who might not otherwise have those opportunities, those who are less fortunate, or whatever. *But* I wonder to what extent those racial set-asides go not to, say, you know, the person who worked to get themselves out of the ghetto or a housing project or whatever, and actually go to college, and was going on, but instead to suburban blacks or suburban Latinos--I mean, to

> whatever extent there *are* suburban Latinos--you know, and those who have gone to, um, suburban [high] schools and have achieved roughly the same as the whites who have gone to suburban schools. I wonder to what extent they're going to *those* sorts of people--those sorts of racial minorities--instead of...those in the cities? . . . A black or a Latino who grew up in the same community as I did and went to the same school and, I mean, and had a nuclear family, and had all the advantages that I did, ought *not* to have the advantages that *should* be allocated to someone who is *dis*advantaged.

Dave agreed,

> Now, when I'm talking about blacks, more or less, I'm talking about the poorer areas....I mean, I'm not referring to the higher class, because those people have *seen* achievement. They know what it looks like. And they're being pushed, you know. I mean, I think that's probably the major thing, is being pushed...not wanting to--not wanting it as much [yourself], but pushing you to the point of where you do want it....Because [achievement is] not a reality [for many inner-city blacks], they must dismiss it from their mind. . . . It's not race, it's class. I think there's poor white areas, and I think they're in the same situation as poor black areas.

Several subjects stressed the relationship of social class to differentials in educational opportunities and performance among whites. College students from well-to-do families would very likely have attended superior high schools, and were more likely to benefit from the superior faculty and facilities offered by more expensive colleges and universities than UIC. Students of more modest backgrounds, several of my subjects included, often had to delay or interrupt college attendance for financial reasons, and were very likely juggling college study with full-time employment. John, for example, might have earned something better than "straight B's" had family problems and financial pressures not forced him to take a full-time factory job during his senior year of high school. Dave explained that his grades had been

> progressively better throughout the years except for when I've had to work a lot....One time particularly I can remember that I was gonna get an A in a course, and because I work on computers, computers go down, and my clients tend to be lawyers and stuff. This lawyer had a case on their hard drive, like, this thick, you know...a couple of hundred pages. And, um, they needed it printed out, but...the hard drive went down, and the case was gonna be like in a week, and I spent many hours doing it. My grades went dropping from A to a C. And so that's something medical schools, when they look at my grades aren't gonna see.

All things considered, some of the men felt that *class*, and not race at all, was the criterion of choice for "affirmative action" interventions of any kind. "I'd be more in favor of a program that just helped lower income Americans, as opposed to this color separation, because there's really, I think, an inferiority--a feeling that--I think there's something going on here, I think it's *very* racist." Should family income cutoffs be introduced, I asked him, to determine which students were eligible for certain programs? "I think that's fine, because someone who comes from a higher income can afford to take, say, the LSAT intensive review, which costs, like, $695."

In the same vein, Bob endorsed class-targeted affirmative action rather than race-targeted policies overall. "I'm sure there's a lot of whites that were deprived" of middle-class advantages. An income limit of $25,000-

30,000 for a two-parent two-child family, for example, might be an appropriate criterion cut-off for eligibility.

As far as programs for undergraduates were concerned,

> Now it may be a higher proportion of blacks and latinos who are part of that--I don't know, like, two or three whites that would be needing the same program--I just--I don't know, I'm just assuming that...if they opened it up to everyone that needed it, you may have a higher proportion of blacks and latinos...but yet you still have the white group that may be in the same category as they are, but not in such large numbers.

On the other hand, there were no objections to race-targeted programming that was *privately sponsored.*

Peter applauded those who acted on their personal commitments to racial equity, whether as a solitary individuals or as participants in group initiatives; but he emphasized that whatever financial investment this might require ought to come from

> Private donors. That is really the way to go for all these programs. You will always find private benefactors that would be glad to promote the same things that the group is promoting. And they would be willing to give up a good portion of their salaries on an annual basis or on a monthly basis to promote those things.

Private sponsorship, Adam emphasized, would not simply save the university money.

> [A] mentor program would still need a particular budget, but the majority of it, which would be *donated* time, donated effort, corporations I would think would do nothing but target these things, maybe pay for it outright just for corporate good will. . . . And it does more to enhance society...[if] people are willing to spend private dollars on this...What it does its it--it really gets to the heart of the matter and shows people are willing to do this outside of an academic environment. It's the *essence* of it really, really working.

In Jeff's view, any sort of affirmative action agenda that involved faculty in extracurricular interventions would impose unfairly on both the institution's and the faculty's resources

> unless the people were to do it on their own time. You know, I mean, if professors want to get together and do this strictly on their own, I have no problem....[As an administrator], I could encourage them, "Yeah, go ahead and do it, as long as you do it on your own time, use your own funding." Because everybody has different beliefs. And if that's their strong belief and their desire, I don't want to squash that.

In similar fashion, Pat felt that

> You can recruit faculty, as long as it doesn't affect their job. Because you can't stop people from helping themselves....because any group of people can come together, call themselves whatever grandiose society, and say, "Okay, we want to *help* these people." So more power to 'em. And if they don't--If I'm not involved in that, or they're not my target organization, they can do whatever they want.

Special praise was directed toward self-help efforts, whether on the part of students or minority fraternal organizations based off-campus. Pat alluded to "black engineering societies that [students] started, they asked faculty to come in and help them, I think that's great." Peter felt that

> If [a black or Latino students'] organization arise out of students' interest to promote a better adjustment for entry-level students, and is supported and managed and administered *by* the students, it is wonderful. . . . [But] to take the tax-payers' money or the tuition money that's being paid and to say, "Okay, we're going to *favor* a particular group," seems pretty bad to me.

While they were diametric opposites on the question of affirmative admissions and a number of other issues--Adam was essentially a "new Democrat" (though perhaps a more subtle thinker than Bill Clinton), Peter a libertarian with an Communist-block immigrant's zeal for the free market--Adam's perspectives on campus-based interventions were in some ways quite similar. In his view, UIC's blacks and Latinos did not suffer from culture shock in the classroom, but from practical limits on the funding of ethnic-specific social and cultural activities outside of class.

> I think the problems that come out here are being able to...maintain an identity that they would like to maintain, and feel that they can't in the environment that they're presented with, because of the limited resources of the university, for a very logical reason: They don't have the ability to cater to everyone's cultural background.

Adam defended a tendency among blacks and Latinos to seek out intraracial friendships and race-targeted academic or social programs.

> Blacks [and] Latinos being more involved with their culture . . . [will] do better *because* they're aware of their culture, and they'll carry the burden on their shoulders of *proving* their culture. . Because of leadership positions in school, I have met a disproportionate [number of blacks and Latinos]...that do strive to achieve an academic background *because* of the color of their skin, because historically they have been--not been able to do that.

There was no question, then, that blacks and Latinos each had a right to "a certain place" on campus, just as Jews and Roman Catholics could avail themselves of Hillèl House and the Newman Center. But

> Those people have chosen to have that. They've made the effort to get that. . . I don't think the responsibility is on the university. To some extent I do, provided you can release certain resources, yes, I do. Because when they do that, it starts to erode some of the stereotypes and feelings that people have of racism, and [improves] the social environment as a whole. But I think the majority of the onus should be on their own people that would like to have that . . . like the American Negro College Fund, and the Latino Centro Corporale, and some of the other things that are going on the campus and that are private interests. . . So . . . I think that responsibility . . . the biggest extent of it, I think, falls on those groups themselves.

Separate but equal?

Regardless of sponsorship, however, there were concerns that racial targeting might work against some of the very objectives that affirmative action and racial diversity were ordinarily thought to advance. Campus-sponsored programs, like affirmative action admissions, might intensify racist animosity. 21-year-old business-major Chris Feraios felt that

> The whole reason why, uh, there's campus violence and everything [is that] the whites just feel that, you know, there's certain--you know, that they--that there hasn't been any, you know, fairness in the way they've gotten here and the way other people have gotten here.

Racially-targeted programming as well, Pat emphasized,

> promotes splits. It doesn't bring anybody together. It just says, "Okay, you're black"...or, "You're Hispanic, and now you get this stuff. You're white, you don't get it." What what's gonna happen? Everyone's gonna break up into little groups..

All things considered, it required very delicate handling.

> There's a lot of animosity towards that....And that might undermine--if it's great enough, if it's not done on the same level of telling everyone else, this is *why* we're doing this. If you don't do that, if you don't educate [white] people on *why* it is you are giving [blacks and Latinos] special privileges, then you are doing more of a harm, possibly...because of the attitudes that are perpetuated through white students being neglected.

However sponsored, moreover, race-targeted programming essentially fostered segregation, further isolating minority students from whites, which could hardly foster the sort of fellow-feeling, the sense of community, on which genuine equality must be grounded.

Dave did not fault blacks and Latinos for feeling a bit out of place in schools or particular curricula in which they were not well-represented, or for seeking out fellow-ethnics as friends and study partners.

> But then again, I don't believe that they should *have* to get together in their own black groups, and I think that's counterproductive...to them, to the whites, to the culture as a whole, if you're forcing that--that difference, that being separate, and you're not sharing....There's a bunch of black organizations here, and there's a bunch of black organizations [outside academia], period, and unfortunately--I feel a lot of them are good, especially when you look in their neighborhoods...But when you start looking into this college...and there's these groups...like the black student government group or something...they're making so many segregations that they're *drawing* these difference, they're drawing things apart. I don't think it's good. I don't think they should have such segregated things. . . .I think that's in every culture....but the ideal is that you don't *want* that to happen...Instead of groups that...segregate these people, these groups should be out there helping them intermix and getting *over* these barriers and getting to know each other, instead of helping segregate.

As discussed earlier, Larry understood why blacks sometimes held "preconceived notions" about white prejudice. But "the only way they're gonna get rid of those preconceived notions....[is for there to be] cultural interaction [between whites and] blacks, to realize that there *is* not basic differences between the two." Bill spoke from his military experience.

> You still have your fair share of [racists]...but...you're goin' to have to stay with each other, so you better get along...And you do things together, you accomplish jobs together, you see that it's up to the person and not to his skin color to--to see what kind of job they can do.

Mike also viewed "intermixing" as the solution to racist inequities.

> For as long as we have affirmative action, then everyone will feel themselves as a separate race, okay? Someday, we're all going to be the same race. . . I think it's gonna be more than a

> hundred years, but...the world's getting smaller, and everyone's, uh, finally mixing. But for as long as we have affirmative action or things of that nature, then we're going to have racism, prejudicedness, and, um/people wanting to stay within their own race, and people thinking differently about each other. So the sooner we take away special treatment to minorities, the sooner they will not be considered minorities.

Like Dave and Mike, most of those interviewed seemed to feel that a grass-roots transformation of "the other" into "one of us" was essential to genuine racial equity. As Glenn put it, "if everybody *looked* at [blacks and Latinos] not as a particular race, or as a particular--but, maybe as an American, or as somebody, you know--then I think that would be--then we'd see equality."

However well-meaning, separatist policies were to considerable extent counterproductive; though their deleterious consequences for campus climate, Adam suggested, could perhaps be offset by more inclusive educational interventions.

> I think [admissions quotas of some kind] might be a necessary evil. But I also see the incredible amount of problems that quotas present for people....Whatever type of affirmative action plan you have...[the school] should have an education program that's just as strong, directed towards everyone, that says why we are doing this. Because if you do not say that, the whole program is lost, and it might as well be a washout. . . . I don't think it should be in one particular class, but that might an answer. Equal opportunity class. Pluralism class. Whatever you want to call it. But I think a *better* way is to meld that into people's educations, like it has been in my curriculum [in the College of Business]. And you do not do this on the basis of lecturing; you allow exchange of ideas. Which most the classes I've been, you know, we have some pretty informative discussions, that I've learned from somebody who's black and who's Latinos views that I never even knew about. But I think you need to provide an opportunity for that exchange to take place.

On the other hand, certain approaches to multicultural education, as the subjects understood it, could prove divisive as well. Brian felt that a greater focus on the minority experience in this country was in some ways a mixed blessing, inevitably exacerbating minority discomfort and inter-ethnic tensions.

> Some things are just offensive, I mean, you just, it's undeniable. I mean, it's a historical fact that, you know, that certain things were this way, and maybe you embarrass [African Americans]. I would say I was even embarrassed at times, being in Professor _____'s class, you know, it's a race-relations-in-America class. It's basically 50-50 white-black [students], a couple of Latinos here and there, and some of things that he talked about and that he, the professor, has to say, are just offensive to say to a black person. And then, at times, he was almost apologetic, being a white professor from Oxford [University], [even though he had] explained *why* it was this way.

Without discounting multiculturalist critiques of the liberal arts curriculum, Hal felt that

> It behooves us to take an honest look at it and say, how much *are* [white male perspectives] influencing this, and how can we make this, you know, gender- and ethnic-neutral? Instead of teaching three different histories from three different perspectives, how can we make this one unified perspective, so we can all see it and treat it all fairly?

On philosophical as well as logistical grounds, Larry was concerned on about what he regarded as undue

demands in some quarters for adaptations to cultural differences in learning styles.

> I think what has to change...is not...the professor, but change the way--standardize the way people are taught...[by] taking the college-type atmosphere and putting it into the high schools, where you get used to working on their own, they get used to being responsible for what they have done....If I was a teacher, I would teach the way I was taught, it's just the way you do it. . . . I think you have to standardize the way that you're taught in high school so that everyone has the same opportunity. I mean it's really tough for a professor to teach if he has a white, black, and Latino classroom to teach a white, black, and Latino way....Maybe in a black culture or a Latino culture, they're used to much more interactive one-one-one....Maybe being in the lecture-hall type atmosphere is very strange to them....[But] that's also a fault with our educa--maybe we should--we have to give them a blending. You're never gonna get one or the other, that's the wrong way to go. . . . You need to integrate everyone into the same society. If you wanna have separate teaching for separate groups, you're always gonna have them separate and you're always gonna have the problems you have.

All things considered, the medicine might be worse than the disease. Advocates of race-targeted interventions tended to take campus racism more seriously than opponents; but a careful reading of the interviews suggests that the special problems of blacks and Latinos *on campus* were insufficient to merit special social programs or academic interventions for students of color. A good deal more salient to policy preferences, it appeared, were the subjects' views on higher education's role vis-a-vis the advancement of social justice and racial equity generally, and their perspectives on institutional racism on the part of the Chicago public schools.

Beyond our gates: The urban mission

"[University-level] affirmative action," John explained, "which I think is wholly necessary and great, is kind of fixing the problem of the *prior* education, which we don't seem to be doing anything about." Larry gave short shift to the notion of curricular or pedagogical bias at UIC; rather, "I think there's a bias in the high schools who prepare the students and those who don't." While he approved affirmative action admissions at all levels as well as interventions with undergraduates, clearly neither was a best-case scenario.

> [Blacks and Latinos of inner-city origins] all carry baggage with them. The point might be, how do you address that? And I think you have to look at...what causes them to get behind....And again, we go back to the grade school and high school affecting them at that level, giving them the confidence and the role models, and that would eliminate all of the rest of it....You wouldn't need [affirmative action at the college level]--you wouldn't have the definite lack of representation that currently exists--if it wasn't for lack of opportunity....You equate opportunity, and then you try to do as much as you can to alleviate the baggage they bring, then you can start equating those [standardized admissions test] scores. But until you do, you're gonna have to have some kind of set-aside that helps that out. Unfortunately.

Himself a graduate of one of Chicago's most selective high schools, Mel's indictment of the public school system was the most scathing.

> The funding isn't there....there's all this constantly cutting back. They acknowledge that there is a problem but, you know. . . . I mean, the large majority are minority students; and I honestly think people turn their back to that...crisis, because, you know, it's just the minorities....You know, screw them, basically was the attitude....Politicians would talk and everything like that, but anybody could talk a good game anyways, but it was just a bunch of b.s., the whole thing, and I honestly think they turn their back. . . . I think they're representing the white public's view. In my neighborhood, nobody sends their kids to the public schools. . . . There're a lot of non-Catholics in the neighborhood that send their children to the Catholic school...because it's a better school, period....but, in a way, you see, that's a cop out....They never attempted--I mean, they started busing minority students in there [and] people said, "Well, we're not gonna send our kids to that," mainly because out of prejudice.

Brian as well linked minorities' academic disadvantages to school funding disparities, alluding to

> the kid from [upper-middle-class suburban] Winnetka trying to compete against the guy from the inner city. The school teacher there's making $65,000 a year, the school teachers here are making 21,000. You know...at second grade, [children in Winnetka are] on IBM computers, and these people are still plugging through.

Brian expressed similar irritation with what he saw as UIC's callous disregard for the Chicago's minority underclass.

> [Minorities] may have resentment. I can imagine being--having spite. And--I mean, [UIC's] neighborhood is--it's ridiculous....Look at this university , world-class university, standing here. You have some of the smartest people in the [academic] profession in this neighborhood. And yet some of the poorest people in the country, two blocks away. The guy that lives across the stress is making, you know, six digits. Now, how would you feel if you were that, um, child living in the ghetto?

Working at the University of Chicago, Theo was not impressed with that venerable institution's social conscience.

> If you walk ten minutes away, you could be killed for your wallet by people who would want your wallet because they're feeding their kids. I don't know what [the University of Chicago's] Pritzger Medical School's *doing* about that. Maybe they're trying to recruit some minorities. . . . Maybe they just tell everybody where they can park their car safely. . . . Probably more like that.

Several men, it is worth noting, regarded the obligations of private and public institutions quite differently. On one hand, several who endorsed an "urban mission" on the part of public universities found this an unreasonable demand on private institutions, even when I pointed out a variety of direct and indirect government subsidies to the latter. Paul Schindler, a 26-year-old social science major, felt that

> It really depends upon the extent of aid they get from the government. I mean, if it's *super, heavily* subsidized, the government should be demand some--it's like, you don't contract something out to a known, like, racial bigot. You know, if David Duke owned his own construction company.

On the other hand, those who rejected that mission for public institutions--or who felt that affirmative action was inconsistent with social justice--nonetheless gave private schools much more leeway in one direction or the other. "Private institution, I don't care what they do," Joe told me. "I mean, they can make all their own

rules." Jeff expressed a similar viewpoint with respect to individual faculty members.

> I don't think promoting social justice is even their job at all. If a professor wants to teach that, you know, I believe he should have the right to teach it, you know. I believe a professor should have the right to say anything he wants in front of a classroom--to a degree. I've had a couple of professors get a little vulgar and, you know, that just kind of blew the class away, you know. But if professors want to promote social justice through their teaching, that would be fine.

Public or private, however, institutional *obligations* to advance racial equity might not extend past marginal equality, unless one could "prove that there was systematic denial," as Andy put it, on the part of *that* school, *in the recent past*. Otherwise, there was just a single "mission" that colleges and universities were obliged to adhere to. As Greg explained,

> What schools are there for is education . . . for everybody that wants it . . . across the board. . . . I'm not here, you know, because I want to become more--because I want to achieve a higher level of social equality with my fellow student. I could care less about that. I'm here to learn.

Zack concurred,

> I see school as a place to get trained for something, a place to learn something. . . . I don't think their job has anything to do with trying to fix problems, and to help social justice; I think that belongs somewhere else in society.

On the other hand, those espousing the urban mission seem to speak from a different construction of "education," such that both admissions or curricular policies consistent with that mission were of real benefit to middle-class white students as well. Nick explained,

> This is supposed to be getting us ready for the real world....I think part of the real world is that everybody is gonna have to learn to get over this color barrier thing. . . . It was one of the nice things about being [at UIC], is that I was exposed to cultures that I never was, you know, in my suburban/.

Prioritizing the functions of colleges and universities, Bill felt that

> Number one should be education--and [social justice] could be part of the education, really. Actually, we could have a whole class on what took place in L.A. [after the 1992 acquittal of the white police officers who had been videotaped beating African-American Rodney King] or you could study that for a whole semester. . . . Let it be known that [discrimination] is taking place. You know, I came from a pretty nice white suburb and everything, and I always thought--I took it for granted that everything was equal, but I've since found out that it really isn't.

In graduate professional schools as well, student body and faculty diversity benefited whites by

> bringing in a different thought process....Our laws are set on prior precedent, and those precedents are basically Anglo-Saxon. To give a different view is not necessarily wrong. Saying the *entire* view--the entire current view is wrong...is false. But you know, bits and pieces of everything. I mean, I really don't think there's anything in the world--any view, any structure, any system that is entirely one hundred percent correct. And you can always learn something from--whether it's a different culture, a different thought process, you know...whether it's understanding, making a point, whatever. It's only positive.

But the educational advantages of an "urban mission" did not simply accrue to the students themselves. Tertiary institutions, Dave pointed out, "play a very big role in selecting the people who are going to help represent the country, you know, and the politicians. . . . They're being groomed by these universities," and one's moral and political perspectives "tend to grab the flavor of wherever you are." There was no conflict whatsoever, in John's view, between "education" and the pursuit of social justice, whether through the curricular changes, admissions policies, or race-targeted programs on campus.

> It's really in the colleges and universities that the leaders of tomorrow, you know, will come from. I think people are most impressionable, most likely to learn the most when they're, you know, in college. So I think it's the perfect place.

But if advocates of affirmative action intervention demanded *more* from colleges and universities, they also demanded a little *less* self-reliance from black and Latino young adults. Not withstanding a consensual affirmation of autonomous achievement as the *sine qua non* of distributive equity, several advocates cut more slack for undergraduates generally. Larry, for example, was sympathetic to the still unformed ambitions of many young adult college students, regardless of ethnic background or prior schooling. "It's real hard to tell somebody 18, 19 that what they did this year is gonna preface the whole rest of their life."

Like many rural, working-class, German-Catholic Iowans, Paul explained, his extended family had had little experience with higher education; he knew first-hand how hard it could be to overcome the kind of childhood conditioning that could lower one's occupational horizons. With this in mind, he felt that race-targeted outreach to undergraduates could be

> very important....If they're still very young in college, they're still developing; it gives them a sense of hope, as in, yes, they *can* achieve this, maybe. Um, I never thought I could get into law school, 'til recently, [when] people started talking to me, you should go to this school, you could do well, you know....It's letting those students who may be struggling, who may think, well, I'm not gonna get there, I might as well just give up, that, well, maybe they *can* get there.

By contrast, those more resistant to affirmative action of any kind were more likely to demand more autonomy, regardless of one's background. Peter, for example, was willing to consider race-targeted outreach only to the very young.

> I do not know where it is, but I feel that there should be a cut-off level at a particular age or, you know, [grade] level where [outreach initiatives] should not be specifically targeted [by race or social class]. I do believe that the children at very young age that have, maybe, some backgrounds that are not very competitive with the rest of the children in their age, maybe they should be helped to get out of poverty. . . . But I think at the college level, I would think that any student who decides to enroll in college, um, would notice his or her potential already, and know how to use it.

On the other hand, objections to special academic handicaps, or to the negative consequences of campus racism, were largely *normative* in character: These things *should not* bother blacks and Latinos, whether or not they actually did.

Gil's position against tertiary-level affirmative action, whether with respect to programs for undergraduates or with respect to graduate school admissions, he found consistent with the American tradition of free elementary and secondary schooling and "fee-for-service" higher education.

> In America, at least, I think that's a *right* to, you know, go to four years worth of high school. . . . [But] when you're talking college and graduate school, that is something you pay for, that is something which comes down to the line of money, and, you know, it's cutthroat. High school is not cutthroat. College and graduate school I think have to be a little more cutthroat.

More generous than Gil, Pat nonetheless expected college students to be much more focused than Larry or Paul did. Whereas "in high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do," at the college level, "I guess by then you know what you want to do. And if you don't, you're spending a lot of money to find out." He recognized that blacks and Latinos might have special needs as first-year students; but "after the freshman year, you know how to take college classes, and you know where to go for help," obviating the need for many kinds of race-targeted interventions. A visibly reluctant advocate of affirmative action admissions and interventions--largely as just compensation for slavery--Steve nonetheless felt that

> Once you get to [the college] level of academics, there's a certain academic culture to which you should be attuned, by that time, no matter who you are. . . . You've got to adjust, and if you don't, it's too God-damned bad. This is a harsh world, you know . . . if [black or Latino college students] haven't adjusted, then it's really their responsibility not to allow these other factors to get in the way.

Even campus racism did not necessarily justify special provisions for minority students. "[Racism] could have an effect" on academic performance, he admitted; but "if it does, then it's, uh...then it's a problem with the student. It's, you know, if they're gonna let that affect them...then their drive isn't there. It shouldn't--they shouldn't let it affect them." Peter seemed to view racism as a fact of life that college students, and minorities generally, had to take in stride.

> Each and every group, when they went through the times of poverty in United States, went through...prejudice. And another one where there *wasn't* a time of poverty...[that is,] the Japanese Americans [during World War II].....And they suffered because of that...[But] the recipient of that...[is] the person that's creating the conflict. And then whatever follows after that, each and every person is responsible for his or her actions. . . . [The effects of racism on academic performance] depends on the person a lot. I'm pretty sure there are students that are deeply affected by this in a negative way, and I'm pretty sure that there are quite a few that would rise up to the challenge....Because it is a challenge. You know, whatever your goal is, whatever obstacles come in the way, if you are willing to achieve that goal, you will try harder.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Regarding both the situation of students of color, and higher education's accountability, institutional racism was very much in the eye of the beholder. Not unlike John Bunzel's findings at Stanford (1991), the same "facts" about the college experience of blacks and Latinos at UIC seemed to point in different directions at the level of policy, depending on the ideological lenses through which they were viewed. Judgments on the consequences of racism for academic achievement depended a good deal on one's willingness to look at racism from the perspective of its targets, and to take seriously both the immediate impact of racism and its long-term, transgenerational consequences for the resilience and self-efficacy of contemporary individuals. Support for affirmative action admissions as well seemed to be associated with a more expansive constructional of collective accountability vis-a-vis equality of opportunity, embracing young adults as well as young children, and relatively subjective barriers to full equality--for example, lack of self-efficacy, or anxieties about white hostility--that were seen to mediate the long-term effects of poverty and racism on the present generation of minority college students. To the extent that "education" was viewed in terms of personal development, intellectual quickening, a broadening of perspectives, cultural bias was more of a risk; at the same time, attention to social issues, multiculturalism, and other initiatives to help maintain and support a more diverse student body were fully consistent with colleges and universities' *educational* mission. By contrast, narrower definitions of education argued against any special efforts to make the college experience more congenial to a more diverse campus population. And a less generous balance between self-reliance and communal obligation argued against race-targeted policies or programs.

This is not to suggest any assumptions concerning the direction of causality--if any--between policy preferences and beliefs about education or distributive justice. Clearly, these interviews were not the subjects' first encountered with the supermarket of ideas, pro and con, surrounding the issues at hand; and it might well be that those less inclined, for other reasons, to support marginally preferential policies on behalf of blacks and Latinos kept their distance from perspectives a little too congenial to those policies. Either way, however, advocates and opponents may be seen to draw on disparate world views, and not necessarily disparate facts, disparate levels of attention to social attention, or disparate levels of commitment to "equality of opportunity"--*as this concept is understood by different people*. Contrary to popular models of affirmative action attitudes, suggesting that ideological resistance to affirmative action masks differences in negative affect and/or economic

self-interest (e.g. Bobo, 1988; Jackman & Muha, 1984; Sears, 1988), the data does not suggest that advocates of race-targeted policies were less racist, or had less to "lose" from such policies, than opponents.

Whichever side of the fence they were on, however, most of the men interviewed for this study were clearly conflicted both on the issue of affirmative action and the arguments that frame it. Sympathetic to the special problems of minorities, either on campus, or in American society at large, they nonetheless tended to feel that racial hostility or minority alienation must be viewed in a comparative context, and were moreover leery of the financial burdens, the ethical compromises, and the racial tensions that race-targeted programs might impose.

Whatever their relative consequences for whites, moreover, "reverse discrimination" vis-a-vis student services, or students' access to jobs or faculty, was in some sense more ethically problematic than affirmative action admissions, in terms of gut-level notions of distributive equity within a given institution. On a big-city commuter campus like UIC, moreover, a great whites suffered alienation, or were struggling to keep their heads above water financially. And my subjects' sympathies for diversity had much more to do with bringing different groups together than with minorities' demands for social or cultural autonomy.

It is always risky to generalize from a study of this kind and this limited scope. But the present findings offer food for thought, nonetheless, for those seeking politically viable avenues to advance racial equity. In this regard, the similarities as well as the differences in perspective between advocates and opponents of race-targeted inventions are instructive. Those policy features that gave pause even to the most liberal advocates of affirmative action are least likely to be sustainable in an increasingly conservative political climate. Conversely, those arguments and initiatives most seductive to the conservative as well as liberal sensibilities may point the way toward some workable middle ground.

Regarding race-targeted programs, first of all, the data suggests that whites readily acknowledge the salience of intra-group solidarity to group advancement. Hence blacks-only or Latinos-only programs will not necessarily draw their fire, not withstanding some concerns for "reverse discrimination." Problems are bound to arise, however, however, when particular initiatives are seen not simply to "level the playing field" but to offer blacks or Latinos services or opportunities *not* readily available to whites--for example, professional mentorships, paid internships, or especially comprehensive academic support services. Regarding the latter, nominally inclusive programs that nonetheless make it their business to target diverse beneficiaries may be much more sustainable than programs defined as minorities-only.

Regarding racially segregated *social* activities, whites may be much less likely to cry foul. The men interviewed were not insensitive to the sense of dislocation or culture shock inner-city minorities especially would be likely to encounter on a white-majority campus. There was a general acknowledgement, moreover, of the persistence of racial prejudice, perhaps not sufficient to impede academic achievement but certainly enough to legitimate ethnic-specific avenues for socialization.

Taken too far, however, black or Latinos separatism may be counterproductive. Rigorous attempts by minorities to establish a kind of parallel universe of social activities and cultural offerings outside of class may give the lie to arguments for the *general* benefits of a more diverse campus. Those benefits--not least of all, to racial equity--cannot accrue unless students of every racial and ethnic background have a fair chance to get to know each other, intellectually and culturally, socially and politically, in and out of class. A close reading of the interview data suggests the paradoxical core of mainstream white commitments to pluralism: Respect for "the other" is intimately linked with an acknowledgement that "the others" are *not so alien after all*--that they are hard workers, dependable comrades, and loving spouses; that their gustatory and artistic traditions enrich our own; that in general, their lifestyles and political sensibilities affirm traditional notions of fair play, "family values," communitarian concern, and respect for individual accomplishment.

Much is made, among contemporary educators and minority activists, of the need to respect cultural differences between different ethnic groups, which is certainly a good thing; but we should bear in mind that "social conservatives" and racial bigots are all to ready to blame long-standing cultural differences for those social pathologies that tend to follow from economic marginalization, whether in Catholic Belfast, white-ethnic tenements at the turn of the last century, or today's largely minority "inner-cities." Only a fool would claim that "getting to know each other" is the magic bullet to obliterate bigotry and negative stereotypes; but surely institutional policies and legal statutes are no substitutes for grass-roots communication and fellow-feeling. In the long run, it does not serve the cause of equality if race-specific programs and activities are not complemented by efforts to bring students of *different* origins together as well.

Mutual understanding is of course one of the fundamental objectives of a more multicultural curriculum. If it had simply been opponents of affirmative action who displayed either ignorance or simple-minded stereotypes in the course of their interviews, one might simply put it down to selective memory or deliberate distortion. What the data suggests, rather, is that a vast well of historical ignorance and anthropological naivete

water the efflorescence of white backlash against government activism and institutional accountability. The American experiences of white ethnics as well as Asians, Native Americans, blacks, and Latinos deserves more play in the college curriculum. For it is simply not enough to know that persons of color were victimized; unless whites know *how much*, for how long, and in what manner white bigotry expressed itself, and unless they appreciate the particular advantages that helped to counterbalance the constraints of bigotry on certain white ethnic groups (for example, Jewish academic and entrepreneurial traditions, and the role of church in the assimilation of successive waves of Roman Catholic immigrants from different parts of Europe), they cannot fully appreciate the distinctive character of the black or Latino experience.

Among the students I interviewed, college courses and course assignments on affirmative action, race-relations, and the cross-cultural universals of moral reasoning seem to have had a significant influence on several men's world views. Academics who still want to "make a difference," *can*. On the other hand, providing a new generation of middle-class white voters with better *information* cannot resolve certain philosophical questions that underlie policy conflicts. How far must collective accountability extend to ensure a requisite level of equality of opportunity? To what extent should *particular* collectivities--families, neighborhoods, religious groups, ethnic communities--be free to advance the competitiveness of their own offspring? To what extent should autonomous merit be expected to overcome environmental and structural obstacles to its expression? While these questions cannot be resolved in our college classrooms, perhaps greater attention to these questions, whether through "core curricula," student media, or other forums might promote a less acrimonious, more thoughtful exchange of views. The college campus may indeed be "the perfect place" to advance the dialogue toward some working consensus.

In the end, however, it may be extremely difficult to maintain college-level, race-targeted affirmative action in any form--not least because the disadvantages associated with racial minority status are so closely intertwined with the disadvantages associated with inferior socioeconomic status, which of course are not limited to persons of color. It is not difficult to argue that college students from the South Bronx or South Central L.A. have special problems and special needs that the offspring of Scarsdale or Malibu do not share. But unless one can make the case that blacks and Latinos *generally* are disadvantaged relative to the sons and daughters of Staten Island, South Boston, or "back-of-the-yards" Chicago, marginal preferences on the basis of race are down for the count.

Class-based preferences, as several observers have noted (e.g. Jorgensen, 1995), are at least as problematic. For the construction of "race" in America at least lends itself to categorical distinctions among different groups of people; whereas the use of class as distributive criterion raises a host of difficulties regarding one's classification. Where to draw the line? On the basis of income, or property, or both? On the basis of last year's income, lifetime income, or the socioeconomic origins of one's parents? Class-based affirmative action gets us out of the frying pan into a lethal conflagration policy makers might best to avoid.

These days, advocates of institutional equity may wish to concentrate their energies on the situation of American children, who are subject to vastly disparate levels of school funding. This is not to downplay structural inequalities of other kinds; but our public elementary and secondary schools are perhaps the sole vehicle for intellectual development, personal growth, and economic advancement with respect to which white Americans' sense of *collective* obligation is not under serious assault. And the plight of minority *children*--or any children, for that matter--clearly resonates more strongly in the American conscience than the plight of young adults. And despite some earnest efforts on the part of conservative researchers (e.g. Chubb & Moe, 1990), most of Americans are unlikely to abandon the all-American notion that "you get what you pay for."

Tinkering with the hallowed tradition of district-based funding is no easy challenge. But in this regard, whites very arguments against marginal inequality at the tertiary level can be turned against them. At the same time, class based constraints on educational opportunities among less advantaged whites might be eased, as well as racial barriers. Black and Latino college students in particular might not *have* many special problems if as school children, they had had a fairer chance to "make it own their own."

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APPENDIX A:
Subjects' Views on Race-targeted Interventions with Undergraduates and Affirmative Action Admissions to Graduate Professional Schools

	Positive rating for undergraduate interventions	.....for affirmative action admissions
Adam Bledsoe	X	X
Andy Suppelsa	X	
Bill Cusack		X
Bob Smith		
Brian Versace	X	X
Chris Feraios		
Dave Zaluba	X	X
Doug Benedetto	X	X
Gil Moreaux		
Glenn Brzenko		
Greg Bogosian		
Hal Voorhees	X	X
Jeff Buchanan		
Joe Murtaugh		X
John Kuchma	X	X
Larry Dobbs	X	X
Marc Metcalf		
Mel Gibran	X	X
Mike Wojkowski	X	
Nick DiLeo	X	
Pat Gahegan		
Paul Schindler	X	X
Peter Czarposny		
Rick Djundza		
Sam Turner		
Sasha Fedelovich	X	X
Steve Dykstra	X	X
Theo Berlund	X	X
Tim Sheehy	X	X
Tom Hanna	X	X
Tony Latham		
Zack Pritchard	X	